

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR

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SUBJECT Civilian Veterinary Administration and Practice/
Production of Pharmaceuticals/Special Status of Certain
Research and of Import-Export Meat Inspection/Extent
of Principal Infectious Diseases

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THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION 50X1

1. In 1941 the USSR was desperately short of trained veterinarians. At that time, the whole country had only about six thousand of them, and half were in the army. A veterinarian who graduated in the early 1940's and was assigned to civilian field work could expect to find himself the only veterinarian in the whole country. The USSR as a whole needs about 700 thousand veterinarians to deal with the animal disease which prevails from Vladivostok to the Turkish border. The USSR practice of executing or imprisoning veterinarians aggravates the shortage. In 1935 the Government killed no less than 375 veterinarians following a severe outbreak of rinderpest which had come in from Turkey. The veterinarians failed to control the spread of the disease to the Government's satisfaction and this large number was executed for allegedly spreading, rather than curing, the disease. Most of the old veterinarians have been removed for political reasons and every year numbers of the younger ones pay with their lives for failures to arrest epidemics.
2. Graduate veterinarians who do not go into the army, into teaching, into routine research (mostly women), or into special research and export-import meat inspection (men and women), are assigned as county veterinarians. The pay is 500 roubles a month for these jobs, compared with the 800 roubles a month for those who go into the army as regimental veterinarians with the rank of captain. There are no private veterinarians in the USSR. Most veterinarians do not have to be Party members but they must be politically above suspicion. Each year a small number of graduates is recruited for veterinary teaching. A student who is interested in teaching as a profession can discuss it with a professor who, if the student is good enough, will recommend to the Director that he be retained as a teaching assistant. The pay for a teaching assistant is

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350 roubles a month and one must serve in this category for at least six years before promotion to full professor (800 roubles a month) can be had. There are no special political qualifications for veterinary teachers.

3. The USSR has no small animal hospitals. However, veterinary colleges maintain clinics where small animals may be brought for treatment. Each town of 20 thousand population or over has a hospital capable of keeping about 50 large animals at one time. These hospitals are completely standardized throughout the USSR. They are under the county veterinarian (he may be responsible for only one or for more than one) and there are two feeding and cleaning attendants. One is an assistant veterinarian who is a high school graduate with special technical training (feldsher) and the other is a general utility man. The service in these hospitals is free and the supplies are adequate. Shortage of personnel is the chief problem. If the animal brought to one of these hospitals is not suffering from an infectious disease, the veterinarian is responsible for routine therapy. In the case of infectious diseases, established Government regulations are strictly followed (see below).

4. There are no professional veterinarian societies in the USSR. Such gatherings of the profession as do take place are all under close Government supervision and are concerned with specific problems rather than with professional fellowship and the general exchange of information. The Government would be highly suspicious of any attempt by the veterinarians themselves to organize privately for any purpose, and the leaders of such an attempt would unquestionably be regarded as enemies of the state. The scientific value of professional societies, if not the morale value, is partially provided by the centralization and control of research and the large amounts of money that the Government spends on such research. No expense is spared in seeking a solution to a problem that the Government considers important. In 1941 the Government had a large group of research personnel tied up in the search for a vaccine for foot and mouth disease. Most of these people were working in a laboratory at a small town near Moscow. There were huge numbers of pigs on the premises. A research laboratory at Leninakan, near Yerevan, was working on the problem of canning meat so that it could be kept for long periods of time without chemical changes.

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- As to the progressiveness of Soviet veterinary medicine, the Government searched constantly for new methods and medications developed anywhere in the world, and was always ready to substitute the new for the old when convinced that the former was an improvement.

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5. The Federal Veterinary Administration in Moscow provides the centralized direction of veterinary practice, research, and the production and distribution of veterinary biological and pharmaceutical supplies. The Veterinary Colleges, however, are under the control of the Ministry of Higher Education. Below the Federal Veterinary Administration are the various SSR Veterinary Administrations. Below the SSR Administrations are the County Veterinarian Administrations. Below the County Administrations, which are headed by the county veterinarian, are the city and village hospitals which may or may not include a regular veterinarian on their full-time staffs. This pyramidal administrative structure is logical and symmetrical throughout; the transmission of directives, the relationships of subordination and superordination, and, to a large extent, the procurement of medical supplies, follow a fixed pattern inherent in the organization. In 1941 the chief of the Armenian SSR Veterinary Administration was a Dr Boyajian, about 43 at that time, who had an excellent reputation as a specialist in infectious diseases. He was not a Communist Party member. His predecessor had been a Party member and was executed for "incompetence" in the late 1930's.

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6. The reporting of diseases is governed by regulations and the system, despite its bureaucratic channelization, works smoothly and adequately. Every case of infectious disease is reported immediately by the county veterinarian to the chief of the SSR by telephone. This telephone report must be followed up later by a written report. The SSR Administration in turn telephones the report to the Federal Veterinary Administration which prepares instructions for the county veterinarian. Until the instructions arrive, the county veterinarian is responsible for taking the necessary quarantine measures. He is responsible for the diagnosis and his vaccination and immunization directives are based on the assumption that his diagnosis is correct, unless higher veterinary authorities have reason to believe he is in error. Normally, the county veterinarian will have a full inventory of sera and vaccines on hand and will administer them according to his instructions from the Federal Administration. Additional requirements are sent immediately, by airplane in serious emergencies, upon requisition through the usual channels. Soviet vaccines and sera are comparable in quality to those used in the US. Quarantine is enforced by the local police under the veterinary's general supervision. The county veterinarians file routine reports every three months on the incidence and treatment of parasitic diseases in their areas.
7. A serious veterinary problem in the USSR, and the reason why anthrax has been so prevalent, is that dead animals are buried in or near the communities in which they have died. The reason is [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] the lack of transportation for moving the carcasses and of facilities for cremating them. The animals are usually buried in special places near rivers and some towns have "cadaver holes" into which the carcasses are dropped and then covered with heavy concrete lids. The police play a big part in all this since they must prevent the people from stealing and eating the carcasses, and they are not always successful. The Federal Veterinary Administration indemnifies collective farms for animal losses, but at a shockingly low rate - usually about 10% of the animal's worth. All animal vaccination is done at the collective farms, every year, and in accordance with Government regulations. The collective farms have no special or standardized isolation facilities and any available building is used. If a collective farm builds a new barn, it will use the old one for the isolation of infected animals. 50X1
8. [redacted] production of veterinary pharmaceuticals and biologicals [redacted] both production and distribution facilities are owned and operated entirely by the Government in Moscow. This industry is controlled by a separate bureau under the Federal Veterinary Administration. Production plants exist throughout the USSR [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] Judging from the speed with which supplies can usually be delivered, [redacted] there is at least one large and diversified plant in every SSR. The production of this material in the USSR is handled as a state secret and no one not directly concerned with it ever acquires much information on the subject. The plants are not publicized and no ordinary veterinarian can gain admittance to one of them. The field trips taken by veterinary students to collective farms, slaughterhouses and the like, never include visits to these production plants. 50X1
9. Meat inspection in the USSR is also centralized in Moscow under the control of the Federal Veterinary Administration, [redacted] 50X1
[redacted] Inspected meat is graded into three groups - condemned, middle quality, and good quality. Inspection is careful and competent but the inspector cannot condemn too much meat without running the risk of being charged as an enemy of the state. Only really dangerous meat is condemned and sometimes not all of the animal is destroyed. For example, the beef from a tubercular cow will usually go through as middle quality after the removal of the lungs and liver.

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The inspection of meat for import and export is a very special activity and is administered by the foreign trade authorities rather than by the Federal Veterinary Administration. The veterinarians assigned to this work are usually Party members and they are all important people. This work, like veterinary biological production, is secret and veterinary students are not allowed to visit the places where this kind of inspection is done.

10. In 1941 every known infectious disease of animals could be found in the USSR and none of these diseases [redacted] was anywhere near being eliminated. [redacted]

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[redacted] Roughly 40% of the cattle in the USSR suffered from brucellosis, and the research people were hard at work on this. At least 1% of the Army horses had glanders. Hoof and mouth disease broke out every year in some part of the country. Rinderpest epidemics were occasionally brought in from Turkey, but most of them were not very serious. The one in 1935, however, was quite serious. Hog cholera was endemic throughout the USSR and there were heavy losses every year from sheep pox in the Caucasus. Sheep tapeworm was also widespread and sheep especially the young ones, had to be wormed every year. Brucellosis and cattle TB were, however, the only diseases which appeared to be on the increase. The only thing [redacted] concerning natural resistance to certain diseases of Soviet animals concerned the resistance to TB of mountain cattle in the Caucasus. It was known that these cattle, which gave little milk and required little food, never contracted the disease.

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